

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (original): A process for manufacturing an electret article, comprising passing melt-extruded thermoplastic resin fibers through a mist space substantially formed from droplets of a polar liquid, and then collecting the fibers, wherein said thermoplastic resin fibers contain electrical-chargeability enhancing agents, and the average diameter of said droplets is less than 20  $\mu\text{m}$ .

2. (original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic resin fibers are not subjected to a drying step after passing through said mist space.

3. (currently amended): The process according to claim ~~1 or 2~~, wherein a resin-droplet percentage of the formula:

$$(W_p/W_f) \times 100$$

wherein  $W_p$  denotes the amount of said droplets forming said mist space and sprayed to a unit volume thereof within a certain period of time, and  $W_f$  denotes the amount of said melt-extruded thermoplastic resin passed through said mist space within a certain period of time is 500 or more.

4. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein a heated gas is blown onto said melt-extruded thermoplastic resin fibers.

5. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein a volume specific resistivity of said thermoplastic resin is  $10^{14} \Omega \cdot \text{cm}$  or higher.

Preliminary Amendment

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6. (original): The process according to claim 5, wherein a volume specific resistivity of said thermoplastic resin is  $10^{16} \Omega \cdot \text{cm}$  or higher.

7. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~, wherein said polar liquid is water.

8. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~, wherein said electrical-chargeability enhancing agent is at least one compound selected from a group consisting of a hindered amine compound, a metallic salt of a fatty acid, a metallic oxide, and an unsaturated carboxylic acid-modified high-molecular compound.

9. (currently amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~, wherein the average diameter of said droplets is 15  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.

10. (original): An apparatus for manufacturing an electric article, comprising (1) a means for melt-extruding a thermoplastic resin containing electrical-chargeability enhancing agents to form thermoplastic resin fibers; (2) a means for spraying droplets consisting essentially of a polar liquid to a space downstream of a direction of said thermoplastic resin extruded from said means for melt-extruding a thermoplastic resin, to thereby form a mist space, the average diameter of said droplets being less than 20  $\mu\text{m}$ ; and (3) a means for collecting said thermoplastic resin fibers which have been passed through said mist space.